

4 Intellectuals' Trial Put Off; Moscow Is Silent on Reason

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MOSCOW, Dec. 11—The trial of four rebellious young intellectuals, which was expected to open here today, has been postponed in an atmosphere of considerable mystery.

Moscow City Court officials said they had no knowledge of the case, and the Soviet press remains silent on it. Friends of the defendants, who gathered at the court this morning, checked further with authorities and defense attorneys and got two versions: The case might be called "at a moment's notice"; it had been postponed "for at least a week."

The four defendants, imprisoned since last January, are Yuri Galanskov, 27; Alexander Ginsburg, 30; Alexei Dobrovolsky, 29, and Vera Lashova, 27. They are charged with "anti-Soviet propaganda," reportedly for having distributed an underground literary magazine, Phoenix-66, and for having compiled and sent abroad a record of last year's trial of writers Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel. (For having their critical writings published abroad under pen names, Sinyavsky and Daniel were condemned to seven and five years imprisonment respectively.)

All Confused

Even those closest to the defendants appeared confused as to why the trial had not begun today. Some thought there had been a misunderstanding between defense attorneys and court officials, with the defense having assumed wrongly that because the Monday date had not been rejected (as

had previous proposed dates) it had been accepted.

Others speculated that the delay might have been due to petitions urging an open trial with full publicity. Two such letters, one with 44 and the other with more than 100 signatories, have been sent to the court. The signatories are said to include the granddaughter of former Soviet Foreign Minister Maxim Litvinov and a number of Moscow University professors.

Still others thought the delay due to the fact that the president of the court was ill and his chief deputy was out of Moscow. The authorities may therefore be waiting only until one or the other is ready to serve.

Early Trial Expected

In any case, a long delay is considered unlikely. The pre-trial investigation was completed two months ago, and foreign radio stations have been talking about the case for more than a week.

Still unclear is the precise nature of the charges against each defendant. Galanskov was the editor of Phoenix-66 and Dobrovolsky was a contributor. Ginsburg was known to have compiled the Sinyavsky-Daniel "white book" and to have sent a copy to Soviet President Podgorniy. Miss Lashova was apparently only a typist. But there is little certainty as to whether the charges are to be separated,

or all the defendants linked to Phoenix, the "white book" or both.

According to one informant with access to security officials, the defendants are to be linked with the NTS (National Union of Labor) a rightwing Russian emigre organization operating mainly in West Germany. The NTS has frequently been charged with support from the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. Links with foreign agencies, however indirect, would appreciably reduce sympathy for the defendants and would make more difficult psychologically the current efforts of more renowned liberal Soviet writers to obtain publication of their works here or abroad.

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